Statement of AJCU Presidents on Undocumented Students

November 30, 2016

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As Presidents of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities we feel spiritually and morally compelled to raise a collective voice confirming our values and commitments as Americans and educators. We represent colleges and universities from across our nation with more than 215,000 students and 21,000 faculty, and over 2 million living alumni.

Grounded in our Catholic and Jesuit mission, we are guided by our commitment to uphold the dignity of every person, to work for the common good of our nation, and to promote a living faith that works for justice. We see our work of teaching, scholarship and the formation of minds and spirits as a sacred trust.

That trust prompts us to labor for solidarity among all people, and especially with and for the poor and marginalized of our society. That trust calls us to embrace the entire human family, regardless of their immigration status (1) or religious allegiance. And experience has shown us that our communities are immeasurably enriched by the presence, intelligence, and committed contributions of undocumented students, as well as of faculty and staff of every color and from every faith tradition.

Therefore, we will continue working:

- To protect to the fullest extent of the law undocumented students on our campuses;
- To promote retention of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program (DACA);
- To support and stand with our students, faculty and staff regardless of their faith traditions;
- To preserve the religious freedoms on which our nation was founded.

As we conclude this Year of Mercy, we make our own the aims enunciated by Pope Francis:

"Every human being is a child of God! He or she bears the image of Christ! We ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved." (2)
We hope that this statement will inspire members of our University communities, as well as the larger national community, to promote efforts at welcome, dialogue, and reconciliation among all that share our land. We welcome further conversation and commit ourselves to modeling the kind of discourse and debate that are at the heart of our nation’s ideals. And we promise to bring the best resources of our institutions – of intellect, reflection, and service – to bear in the task of fostering understanding in the United States at this particular time in our history.

Signed,

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Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities


(2) Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for The World Day Of Migrants And Refugees (5 August 2014).